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Työn nimi Comparison of Finnish and Russian Urban Planning: Citizen's Involvement

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This study is a comparison of citizen's involvement in urban planning in Russia and Finland, based on case studies Helsinki Vision 2050 and St.-Petersburg 2030. Quite a few studies of citizen's involvement were recently made, but the majority of them are concerned with Finnish cases. The analysis of the St.-Petersburg 2030 -case is emphasized in the study, as Helsinki Vision 2050 is very much familiar to the practitioners of Urban Planning.

The study provides a cursory overview of citizen's involvement in St.-Petersburg, both qualitatively and quantitatively. Even though the legislation for urban planning in both cases is quite similar, the analysis has uncovered differences in implementation that have decisive impact on the outcome. The premise for citizen's involvement is motivation of the citizen, in the case of St.-Petersburg 2030 the motivation by possible negative impact has shown to activate the citizens. However, such activation leads to nimbyism that does not serve the process of urban planning as a whole. The involvement of citizens as creative actors in urban planning is important and it affects positively the outcome, but it requires that citizens strive for the common goal and seek joint solutions. Such activities require that the citizens are confident in their ability to have impact on the outcome and that they perceive the cityscape as a whole.

The openness and availability of the data are different criteria than applicability and accessibility of the said data. In case of St.-Petersburg 2030 -case the unrealistic basis of urban planning and the illegibility of the data provided by the officials have had a negative impact on citizen's involvement. At the present moment it is not yet possible to assess how much does such participation benefit the city planning and if it does at all. The feedback collected from the citizens is at the present point being processed by the city planning department of St.-Petersburg, any changes to the city plan that stem from that feedback will manifest themselves in future revisions of city plan.

Avainsanat urban planning, citizen's involvement, St.-Petersburg 2030

AALTO-YLIOPISTO

Taiteiden ja suunnittelun korkeakoulu

Arkkitehtuurin koulutusohjelma

Comparison of Finnish and Russian Urban Planning:
Citizen's Involvement

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1 Introduction

Urban Planning is a complex entity. There are quite a few definitions for it: “the planning and design of urban areas “,¹ “the planning and regulation of building, development, reconstruction, etc., in an urban area”.² Urban Planning, according to the article “Urban Planning” in Encyclopaedia Britannica by Susan S.Fainstein (professor of Urban Planning, Harvard University), encompasses the following:

“...design and regulation of the uses of space that focus on the physical form, economic functions, and social impacts of the urban environment and on the location of different activities within it. Because urban planning draws upon engineering, architectural, and social and political concerns, it is variously a technical profession, an endeavour involving political will and public participation, and an academic discipline. Urban planning concerns itself with both the development of open land (“greenfields sites”) and the revitalization of existing parts of the city, thereby involving goal setting, data collection and analysis, forecasting, design, strategic thinking, and public consultation.”³

One way to approach Urban Planning is to think of it as an interaction of theory, methodology and legislation, which define the process of Urban Planning to an extent and reaction of the environment - economic, cultural, social, political, etc. - to the process. The result of this interaction is the built environment. It is crucial to be aware that the efficiency of Urban Planning systems is in most cases judged through the built environment it produces, however built environment is also affected by many factors that are independent from Urban Planning. For instance, global economic crisis or politic crisis are absolutely independent from Urban Planning, but those affect, amongst other things, the construction of new buildings, the activity of the investors and the well-being of the general population, which translates into effects on built environment. When one tries to compare Urban Planning systems, one has to adjust for the skew caused by those external factors.

¹ *Collins English Dictionary*;

<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/urban-planning> retrieved on 13.03.2017

² Oxford Living Dictionaries; https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/urban_planning retrieved on 13.03.2017

³ Encyclopaedia Britannica: Urban Planning; <https://www.britannica.com/topic/urban-planning> retrieved on 15.03.2017

1.1 The rationale for the research and case selection

The topic of my research is Comparison of Finnish and Russian Urban Planning: Citizen's involvement. The study will be concentrated on two cases: City of Helsinki, "Helsinki 2050" - zoning plan and City of Saint-Petersburg - Strategy of Economic and Social Development of Saint-Petersburg - 2030. Those two cases were chosen as both of them share enough of common ground to allow comparison of some aspects and deduction of conclusions. The intended readers of this work are more familiar with the case Helsinki Vision 2050 and Finnish Urban Planning. Based on this assumption the study will give preference to the case St. Petersburg and Russian Planning in terms of research and reference material.

It is very important to recognize the differences in circumstances: the aim of the research is to compare a particular part of two different Urban Planning systems – the involvement of citizens - but as the objects of the analysis are two cases, which are a result of interaction of said systems and local circumstances, the later have to be accounted for.

Both of the case studies selected represent long-term vision strategies. Both Helsinki St. Petersburg are (amongst) the largest cities of their respective countries. Even though Helsinki is the capital of Finland and St. Petersburg is not the capital of Russia, politically and economically both cities play comparable role in their local environment. Both Helsinki and St. Petersburg are the centres of the agglomeration and both affect the outlying territories far beyond their respective administrative boundaries: for example, Helsinki has a gross rate of workplace sufficiency of 130%, net rate of workplace sufficiency around 75%. The Helsinki region forms a large, uniform economical area; the workplace commuting does not correlate much with administrative borders.⁴ St. Petersburg too is tightly connected with the surrounding areas: it competes on labour market, investments and other resources with the rest of the agglomeration.⁵ The first notable difference in circumstances that affects the built environment is the difference in taxation: in Finland the income tax is paid to the municipality of residence, whereas in Russia the income tax is paid to the municipality where the actual work is conducted. As a result, in Finland the municipality is most interested in the residents, whereas in Russia business is more attractive from the point of view of taxation and infrastructure.

⁴ Sukkulointi katsaus 2015, Helsingin seudun ympäristöpalvelut

https://www.hsy.fi/fi/asiantuntijalle/seututieto/tyopaikat/Documents/Sukkulointikatsaus%202015_Versio%208.6.2015_3.pdf, p. 22, retrieved on 01.05.2017

⁵ L.E. Limonov, A.R. Batchaev, St. Petersburg and Leningrad Region: Interaction, Problems, Coordination of the Metropolitan Area Development; *Пространственная Экономика* 2013. № 1. p.123-135 <http://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/sankt-peterburg-i-leningradskaya-oblast-svyazi-problemy-koordinatsiya-razvitiya-aglomeratsii> retrieved on 20.03.2017

1.2 The legislative basis

From legislative point of view, the Urban Planning systems of Finland and Russia have quite a lot of common ground. On the topic of citizen involvement, the Finnish legislation states the following:

“Upon drafting a zone plan, (the planners) have to create, on an early enough stage, a plan for participation and interaction and an evaluation of consequences of the zone plan.”⁶

The Urban Planning Codex of Russian Federation postulates the following as one of the main principles of legislation concerning urban planning: “Participation of citizens and their associations in the implementation of urban development activities, ensuring the freedom of such participation.”⁷

Based on the referenced laws we can conclude that both Finnish and Russian Urban Planning assumes and allows for some level of citizen’s involvement in the planning process. However, it remains to be seen in which category of Planning Theory these systems belong: based on the declared properties, both systems can be placed anywhere between aggregative/comprehensive-rationalist and agonistic planning theories, depending on whether or not the communicated intention is true. If citizen’s involvement is only ostensible in nature and the interaction is just a one-way communication from the expert-oriented public administration, then the discourse is of therapeutic character and the system does clearly belong into the category of comprehensive-rationalist planning system. In which case it mimics some aspects of a more democratic communicative system if only to calm the citizens and make them less critical about the decisions made. On the other side of the spectrum, in agonistic planning theory, the citizen is seen as a provider of complementary views and a legitimate adversary. It is worth noting that the only way to find out which type of planning are we actually facing is to find out if the information communicated by the citizens, their views and suggestions, has caused changes in the outcome. However, if no such case is found, it does not invariably mean that the communication and citizen participation is ostensible in nature – it might also be the case that other circumstances, such as economic or those of engineering nature (infrastructure involved, geological structure, etc.) have made the suggestion of a citizen unfeasible, thus resulting in no change made to the plans.

⁶ Maankäyttö- ja rakennuslaki, 63§, translation by author;

<http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/1999/19990132> , retrieved on 20.03.2017

⁷ The Urban Planning Codex of Russian Federation, Градостроительный кодекс РФ , Chapter 1, article 2, translation by author <http://kgainfo.spb.ru/zakon/zakonodatelstvo-rossijskoj-federacii/> retrieved on 20.03.2017

The law that obliges the Finnish planners to provide for citizen's participation dates back to the year 2000 and parts of it were later revisited in 2008 and 2017. Its Russian counterpart dates back to December 2004; even though many parts of the Codex were later revisited, the statement about citizen's participation was unaffected.

1.3 The (un)importance of citizen's involvement

All planning theories and systems should be examined within their historical and cultural context. A Planning System, depending on the implementation, can have different stance on citizen's involvement. In many cases, citizen's involvement is not the key to creation of a strategy, but rather means to achieve citizen's complacency and citizen's commitment to the development strategy. An individual citizen's role and significance to the City has changed throughout the history. As the economic power became more and more divided between the citizens, each individual citizen's role as a local actor on the economic landscape of the city became more and more significant, contrary to the previous situation when the only actors with considerable power were monarchs, aristocracy and big companies. Those processes have historically coincided with a political shift from monarchy towards democracy and with a raise in general education level. The shift in ideology and emancipation of general public has led to a higher mobility of citizens and their higher involvement in different matters, politics and other aspects of social life. In terms of Urban Planning, aforementioned processes have led to a shift in the role of the citizen from passive bystander with little options or influence to an active participant upon whom the success of planning strategy, at least partially, relies. The change in planning theories did not happen overnight nor did it happen without friction: Urban Planning, as an institute with traditions and inherited practices, required quite some time to adapt to new models of operation. It is the aim of my comparative analysis to find out how Urban Planners of Russia and Finland have adapted to the new realities.

2 The Analysis

2.1 The Basics

When analysing a system, one must understand that the intended design and the result are not identical: different factors impose limits on the actual implementation. Such factors can be limited time, limited amount of knowledge and the capacity to process it, reliance on external sources of information, cultural features which impede citizen's participation, etc.

Both Finnish and Russian Urban Planning systems were criticized by citizens and various experts as "detached" from the public, the communication and interaction as being "shallow and superficial".⁸

As Helsinki Vision 2050 is without a doubt a much better known case, the study will be primarily concentrated on St. Petersburg strategy 2030 and the processes around it, whereas Helsinki Vision 2050 is considered to be more or less common knowledge with less need for reference material.

⁸ Criticism of Finnish Urban Planning: Lahti, Tanja & Laine, Markus (2013) Kaupungin toiminta tutummaksi ja vuorovaikutus vahvemaksi. Helsinkiläisten näkemyksiä kaupungin toiminnasta ja päätöksenteosta vuonna 2012. Helsingin kaupungin tietokeskus. tutkimuskatsauksia 2013:1. Helsinki.

Criticism of Russian Urban Planning: Aleksandr Karpov (director of ECOM –expertise centre) in an interview for "Novaya Gazeta" on 19.05.2014 , <http://novayagazeta.spb.ru/articles/8777/> , retrieved on 14.04.2017

2.2 Case Helsinki, Vision 2050, Pro Helsinki 2.0, Varjoyleiskaava &Co; abridged

Citizen's involvement in Finnish Urban Planning in case of Helsinki zone plan is a much more familiar topic for the intended readers of this paper. Here is a reiteration of the main aspects of citizen's involvement, both from the point of view of citizen's activity and the facilities provided by the city planning department of Helsinki. The public workshops and discussions were announced in the internet and in the local newspapers. Public display of the material was held at the city planning department and at the Laituri in the centre of the Helsinki. The workshops have provided the guidelines and basic skills for the citizens to "work&talk" the city plan.

A group of citizens "Urban Helsinki" has created an alternative solution for the city plan. This creation was also announced on the official webpages of the city planning department. A specialized web-portal was created specifically for the needs of city plan. The materials on the exhibit were not only the official maps, but also a graphic representation of different aspects of "Vision 2050" was created and updated as the development moved forward.

The updated version of city plan is available to the public as a collection of thematic maps; currently the presentation technique, as the plan matures, proceeds to be more and more detailed, more on the level of official document and less that of a vision. The booklet has gathered a few opinions in the comments –section; however, a nameless shout out can hardly be justified as a credible source.

2.3 Case St. Petersburg, Strategy 2030

The very basis of the St. Petersburg 2030 –strategy is a document⁹ of 138 pages, dated 13.05.2014; as it is backed by the governor of St. Petersburg, it guides every single decision made in St. Petersburg 2030 – strategy, any deviation from the default state has to be backed by analysis and arguments. The SWOT analysis states that business and tourism are dependent on macroeconomics and will benefit from international mobility, investment, both local and international, are dependent on macroeconomics and political situation. The document outlines 3 scenarios for the development of St. Petersburg: conservative, moderately-optimistic and innovative. The conservative scenario is based on the assumption of inertial development of the city, the innovative scenario is based on the assumption of full utilization of the potential of the city. The prognosis was made for all three scenarios and the innovative scenario was selected as the main scenario for the long-term strategic planning. The following is cited as the basis for the possibility of the innovative scenario:

“The probability of implementing an innovative scenario is based on assumptions about the preservation, on the whole, of a favourable situation in the external environment in relation to St. Petersburg. The development of St. Petersburg in the long term should be facilitated by such factors and conditions that have developed in the external environment as a further strengthening of Russia's geopolitical position in the international arena and the preservation of relative political stability and public peace in the country. Among the important external factors and conditions, also include the cessation of the slowdown in the growth rates of the world and Russian economy, the preservation at a relatively high level of world prices for the main commodity groups of Russian exports, the absence of large-scale natural and man-made disasters of a global nature.

The possibility of successful implementation of the innovative scenario is based on a number of assumptions about the minimum permissible parameters of the state of the external environment. In this connection, the following assumptions are introduced. In the period 2014-2030, the average annual growth rate of the Russian economy will be at least 2.5-3%, world prices for Russian oil will be at least \$ 90 per barrel, and for natural gas at least \$ 300 per thousand cubic meters. M (in prices of 2010). The rate of increase in real wages will be slightly higher than economic growth; Russia will adhere to the model of the social state. Crisis scenarios associated with the collapse of prices in world commodity markets, a sharp decline in the physical volumes of

⁹http://cedipt.gov.spb.ru/media/acts/2015/11/27/Стратегии_экономического_и_соц._развития_Санкт-Петербурга_на_период_до_2030_года.rtf , retrieved on 20.04.2017

Russian exports, the introduction of international sanctions against Russia, the deployment of large-scale military conflicts, the emergence of man-caused or environmental disasters of a global nature are not considered in the Strategy.”¹⁰

Those are the arguments for the selection of the most optimistic, innovative development scenario as the basis for the Strategy 2030. On a side note – the price of crude oil has plummeted on the summer of 2014, was on its local minimum in the beginning of 2016 and is currently under 50 USD/bbl.¹¹ The natural gas is currently priced at 3.21USD/mmBTU, which equals roughly 102 USD/thousand cubic meters.¹² The Russian economy advanced 0.3 % in the fourth quarter of 2016, it was the first expansion since the fourth quarter of 2014.¹³

As one can see, the economic parameters cited as the basis for the scenario were out of target values since the selection of the scenario. However, no steps were taken to adjust those values or to adjust the St. Petersburg Strategy 2030 accordingly. It remains unclear why no adjustments were made and why no questions about the necessity of adjustments were raised – there is no clear explanation nor facts to support one theory over another. It is also unclear whether the usage of those unrealistic parameters have had a negative impact on citizen’s involvement in the process – the perception of city planning department going after completely unrealistic scenario based on unrealistic parameters could have discouraged citizens from taking part in the affair.

St. Petersburg consists of 18 administrative districts. The first part of implementation of St. Petersburg Strategy 2030 is the creation and approval of a new city plan, the previous city plan was made in 2005, the development outlined by it has been partly completed and the necessity of the parts not accomplished has to be reviewed. The documentation for the new city plan was on display from 30.01.2017 until 26.02.2017, and in the last days of February // first days of March public hearings took place in each of those districts. The documentation included maps with different layers and plans for the future development of the city. It is hard, however to evaluate effectiveness of such presentation from point of view of a citizen: all the data is there, but is it presented in a form that is useful for a citizen? The maps are at a scale of either 1:25000 or 1:50000, the different maps represent different topics of urban planning –

¹⁰ Chapter 2, pages 33-34

http://cedipt.gov.spb.ru/media/acts/2015/11/27/Стратегии_экономического_и_соц._развития_Санкт-Петербурга_на_период_до_2030_года.rtf , retrieved on 20.04.2017

¹¹<http://www.infomine.com/ChartsAndData/ChartBuilder.aspx?z=f&gf=110537.USD.bbl&dr=m&ax&cd=1> , retrieved on 05.05.2017

¹² <http://www.infomine.com/investment/metal-prices/natural-gas/1-year/> , retrieved on 05.05.2017

¹³ <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/russia/gdp-growth-annual> , retrieved on 20.04.2017

transport infrastructures (different maps for different types of transport), buildings zoning, green areas etc. However, the maps do not have the cross-reference to the present state. While it is possible to say if an element is a new or an old entity within the context of the layer represented, it is not possible to say what was located on its' place before if the category of elements in question is not present at the layer. For example, to trace a transition of a recreational area into a residential area, the citizen would have to compare two different maps side by side. Whether or not such comparison was possible, is unknown, as no description or photographs of the document display are present. The other way to compare the plan to the present state is to have an intimate knowledge of the area, which can only be achieved at the local level that leads to a large amount of comments concerning only the near proximity of the residence of said citizen. The following reports from each of the hearings are in public access and by analysing them the study is going to approach the question of citizen's involvement in Russian Urban Planning. It is worth noting that everyone could participate in any of the hearings by his own volition and the hearings handled the plan as a whole – it is possible to comment on the parts of the plan that are located outside of the district itself. The transcript of public hearings includes both written comments and questions asked during the hearing itself, however different districts have used different methods on preparing the documentation, which makes the analysis of the transcripts time-consuming and ineffective. On a more important note, should any active citizen of St. Petersburg try to examine the documents in order to create a comprehensive overview of other citizens' comments, - the data is provided by the city, but the data format (printed and then scanned transcripts, pdf-encapsulated jpeg or plain jpeg) will significantly hamper his efforts. This oversight does definitely impact the citizen's involvement degree in a negative way.

2.3.1 Analysis by district: Admiralteyskiy



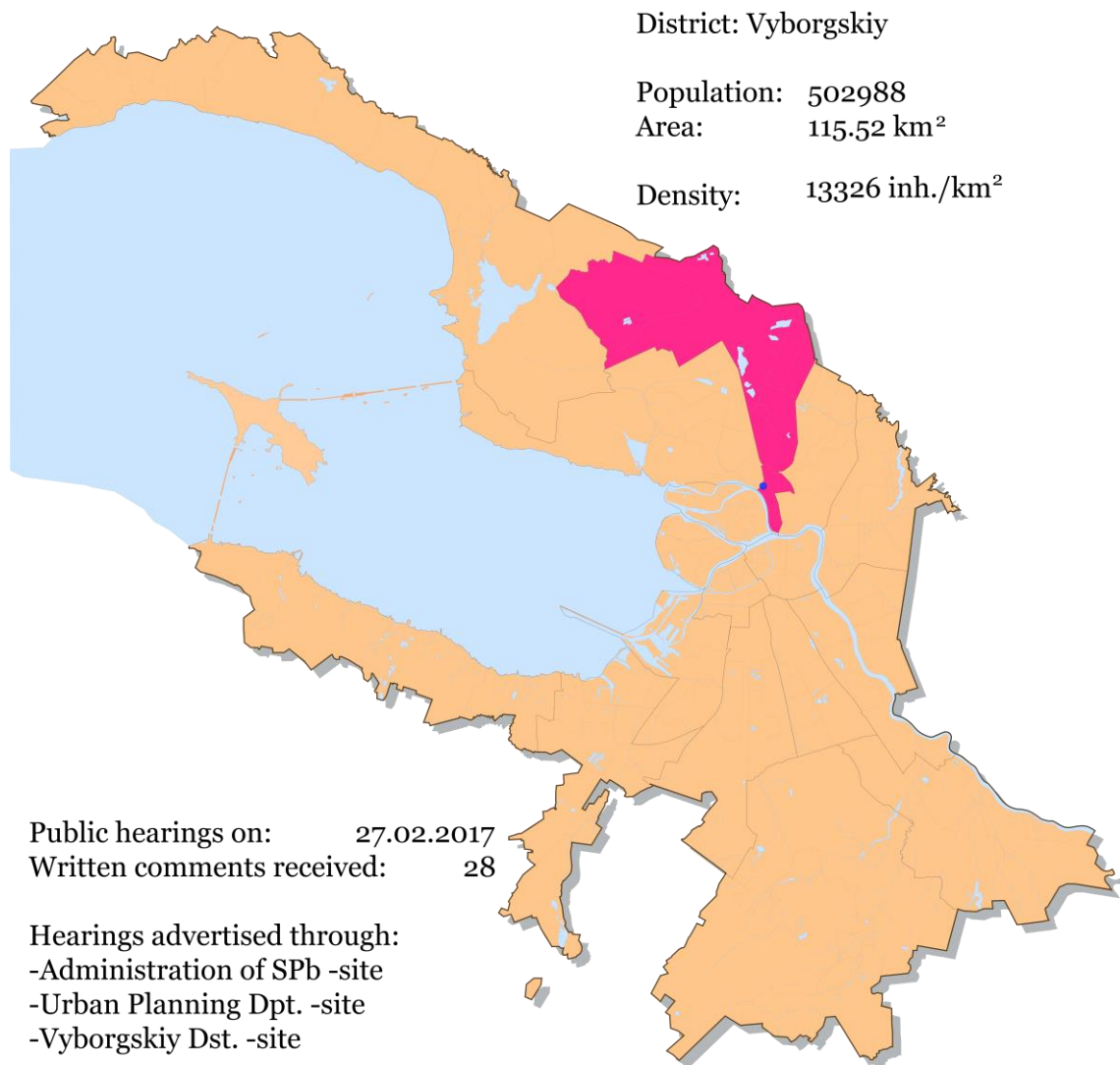
This is one of the districts located in the historical centre of the city. There are no major logistical infrastructure projects on the way for the district, a large amount of the written comments were from a deputy (43 of them), which were corrections to the markings on the map: the projects are color-coded by the planned implementation time and some were marked incorrectly. As such, those comments should not be counted towards citizen's participation in the process, as those do not affect the actual plan. The rest of the 15 commentators (this district decided to group written comments by the writer) have concentrated on a stretch of highway on the southern side (Pushkinskiy district).

2.3.2 Analysis by district: Vasileostrovskiy



Vasileostrovskiy is another of the historical districts of the city. An important difference from the previous district – there are big development projects on the western side of the island (Western Speed Diameter – already built), new artificial territories are created and new residential areas and tourist infrastructure for the harbour is constructed. This district took some effort in informing the residents – the letters were sent to the inhabitants in order to inform them of the planning process. The 43 of the above comments are a duplicate from the deputy from the first district. However, in this particular case the deputy was marked as a private person. The rest 37 commentators were mostly concerned with diminishing green areas of the island, the traffic that new residential area will bring. Some of the commentators raise the same issues with the highway through a settlement as in the first district (Pushkinskiy district). The main difference in comparison to the first district is that local (my back yard) problems get much more attention than the bigger projects which are located further away.

2.3.3 Analysis by district: Vyborgskiy



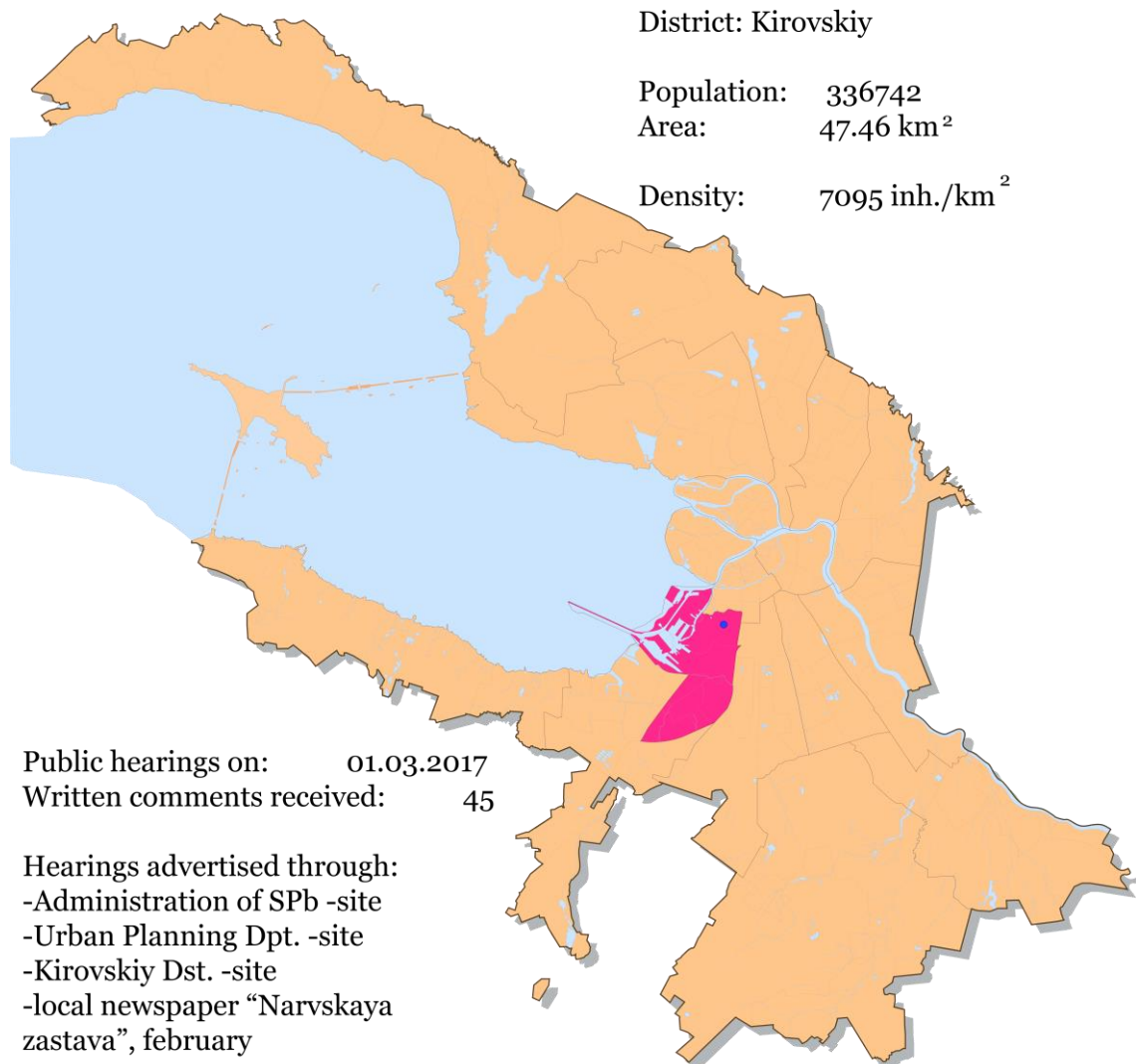
Vyborgskiy district is composed of both historical areas and areas which were only recently developed by the city. The district administration uses yet another way of marking the commentators: companies are marked by their respective name, but other commentators are given a “number of incoming documentation” which is used to designate them. Out of 27 commentaries marked for further investigation, 10 were made by building companies and are basically requests to allow for denser building (low-rise buildings instead of detached houses), a few requests for zone change to allow for agriculture use or construction of small scale factories. The rest are concerned with the highway being constructed too close to the residential areas and the impact it will have on the green areas (Pushkinskiy district). A commentary about an observatory with, according to the commentator, unique capabilities in high-precision stargazing, which could be impacted by constructions in proximity and the loss of such capability could have a detrimental effect on scientific astronomy in Russia on a strategic scale. The observatory itself is located in the southernmost part of the city.

2.3.4 Analysis by district: Kalininskiy



Kalininskiy district was for quite some time referred as one of the “dormitories” of the city – mostly residential area with little, localized industry. Though the industry itself could have a lot of importance for the country as a whole (such as aerospace laboratory), it had minor effect locally. Out of 8 commentators only one is a private person, the concerns raised by the commentary were of extremely localized nature (against the further densification of the micro-district the person lives in). However 3 deputies and one of the high-ranked official of the metro have asked for corrections in the future plans for the metro-railway connections and a few clarifications (on already existing) metro infrastructure buildings.

2.3.5 Analysis by district: Kirovskiy



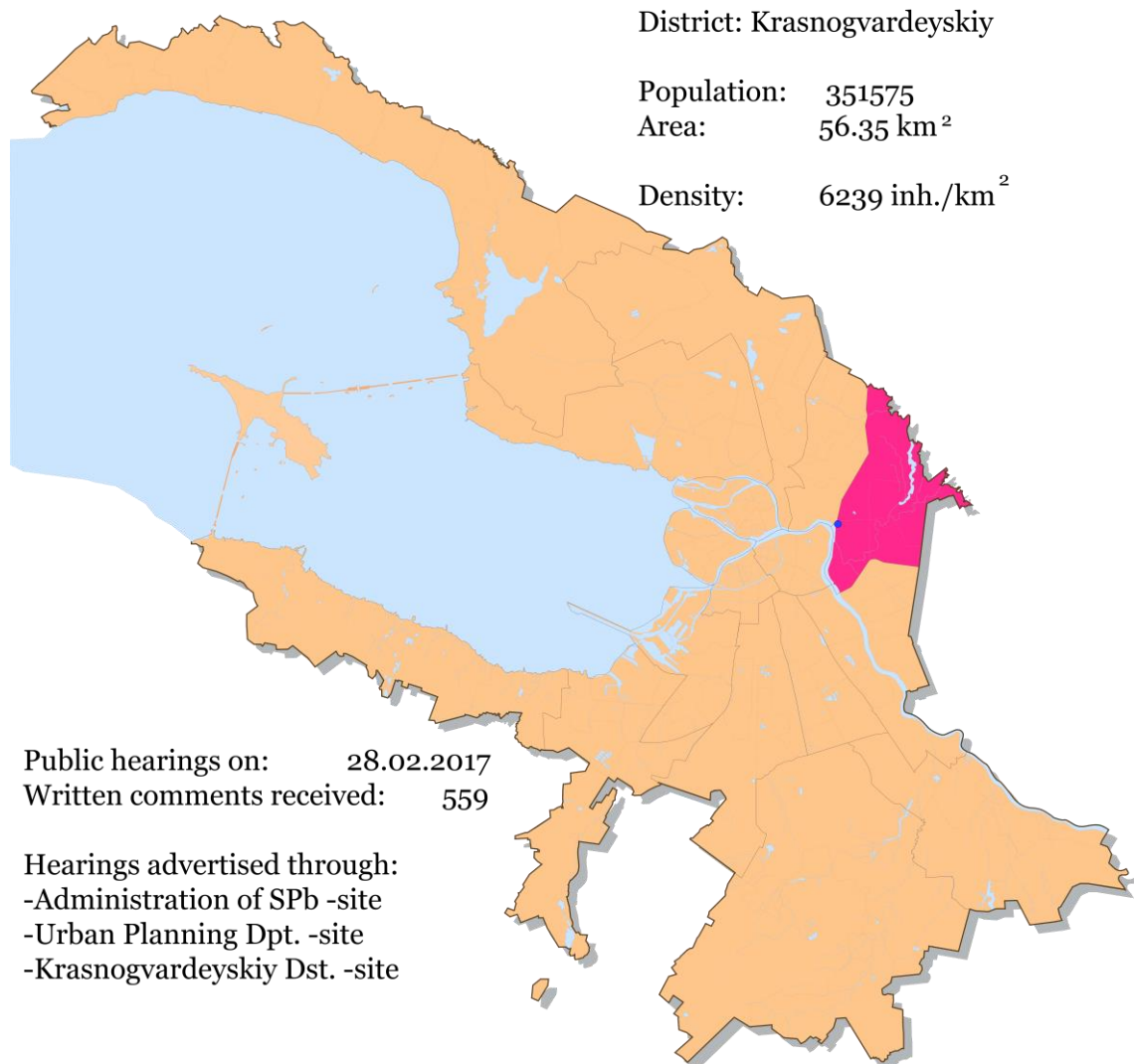
Kirovskiy district is one of the oddball areas in St. Petersburg: the industry is yet to move further away from the city, the process that took place in other parts in the 1970s did not happen here, as the abundance of unused territory provided no pressure to develop this particular area. Nowadays, even though the price for residential zone was at a premium before the latest political events (Crimea annex), it was economically unfeasible to develop the area as the infrastructure for the residential area is generally absent. In addition, some railroad- related infrastructure would have to be moved further south. Those factors explain the comparatively low density of the population and the type of comments: out of 45 written comments 41 are combined into 2 issues, both of them concerning a small-scale non-profit agricultural settlement (village-like entity) and the problems of its existence. The rest of the comments are addressing the highway through the settlement in the south (Pushkinskiy district).

2.3.6 Analysis by district: Kolpinskiy



Kolpinskiy district one of the most industrial districts of the city. It would be more precise to view it as a detached settlement of Kolpino, but due to administrative reasons it is considered a part of the St. Petersburg. All of the commentaries are of local nature. The commentaries from private persons were aimed at resolving conflicts in documentation of land use. This area lies outside of the Eastern Speed Diameter and the inhabitants do not feel the impact of its construction. The involvement of the citizens is expectedly low as this mostly agrarian area with low population density – less territorial pressure, less territorial conflicts, cheap (in comparison) land – all those factors translate into general passiveness and weariness towards the public hearings.

2.3.7 Analysis by district: Krasnogvardeyskiy



Krasnogvardeyskiy district is one of the most rapidly developed areas in the past 20-40 years. As the area of rapid growth, it is prone to a multitude of problems: the pressure to build residential areas was channelled into this district and the local infrastructure was not developed adequately. For instance, large garage fields are a concern of the inhabitants – should the city use the area currently occupied by the garages to draft a highway, the citizens will have nowhere to park their cars. Additionally the inhabitants are concerned with both noise and chemical pollution the highway will introduce. All of the comments are grouped into 45 cases with varying amounts of participants with the absolute majority requesting either to postpone the drafting of the Eastern Speed Diameter until the needed ecological data is collected and verified or to move those highways further away from the residential area. There are some entries backed by single private persons considering the unfinished logistical infrastructure that causes traffic congestion in the area. The city of Vsevolozhsk, located some 15-20 km further to the north-east and the radial connection from the “ring” -highway into the centre of St. Petersburg compound the severity of traffic problem even further.

2.3.8 Analysis by district: Krasnoselskiy



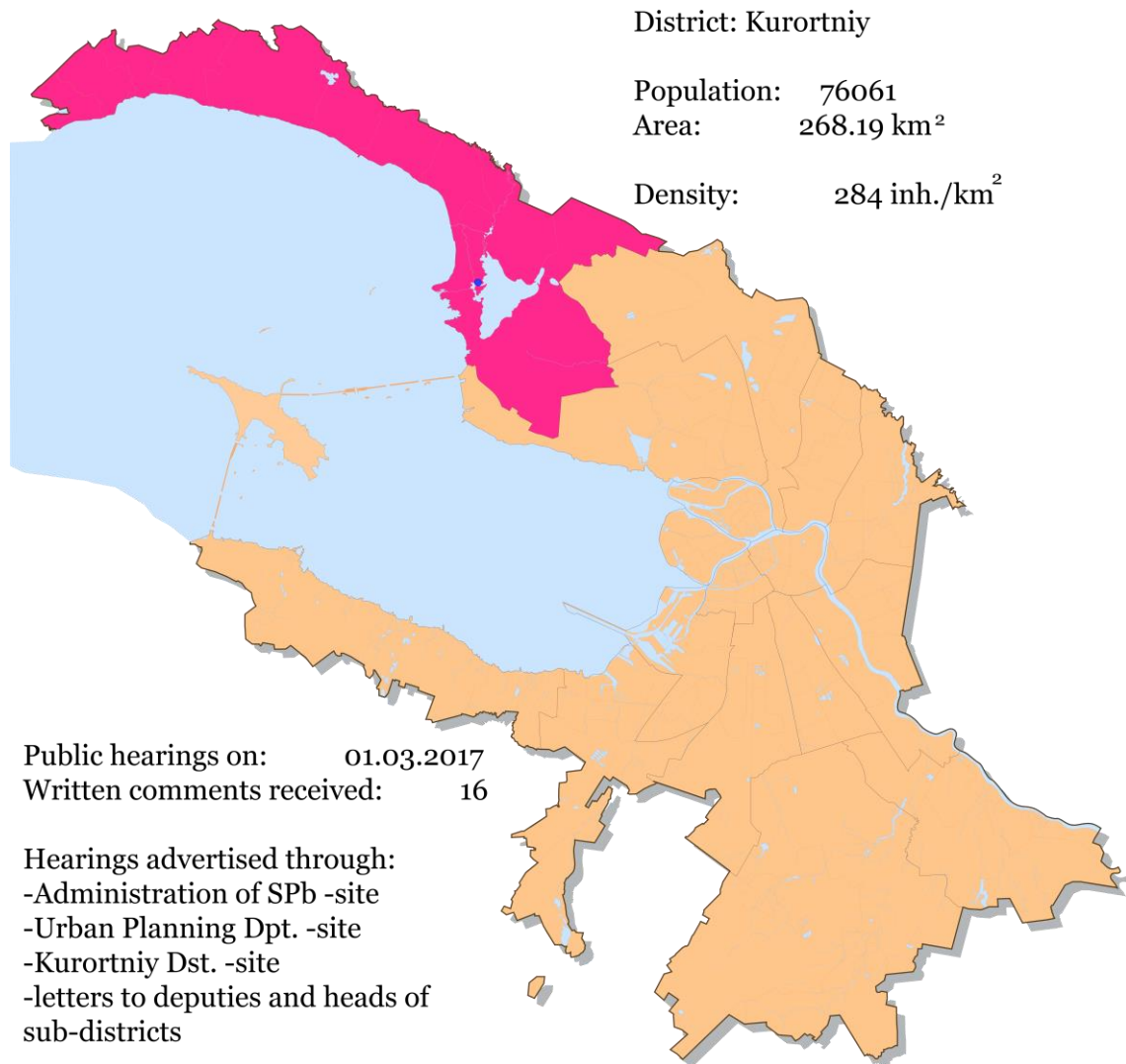
The Krasnoselskiy district is one of the underdeveloped suburbs of St. Petersburg: it is located radially behind the Kirovskiy district and shares the same gradient of city<->undeveloped zone as Kirovskiy, but whereas in the upper district the city-type of buildings and industry are the predominant type, here the detached houses with their own mini-agricultural plots are dominating the area. In the southern-most part is located the settlement Krasnoe Selo (Red Village) which gives the name to the whole territory. Once a satellite settlement, it belongs now administratively to the St. Petersburg, but in terms of built environment and infrastructure it is still an isolated area. It is located far enough from the city, the current projects do not concern the citizens and it can be seen in the involvement of the inhabitants. The comments are concerned with local relocations of the small-scale industry and removal of documentation conflicts considering some plots which were “given into use” on the eve of collapse of USSR and the legal status of which was left unconfirmed at the time.

2.3.9 Analysis by district: Kronstadtskiy



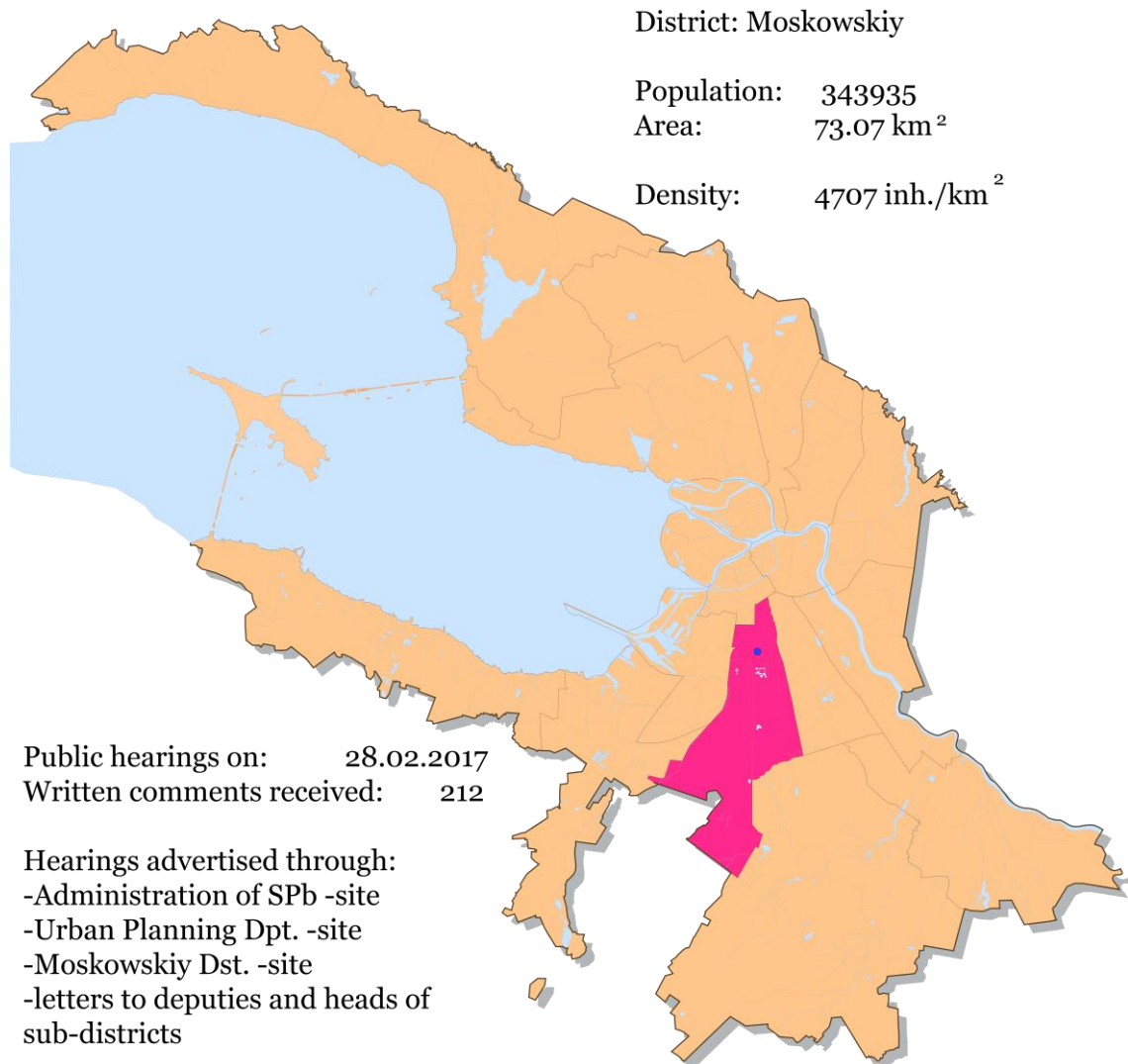
Kronstadt was the marine fortification which guarded the only fairway suitable for the larger ships from Baltic Sea into the St. Petersburg. It was a closed military city for quite some time and the area is still of high military importance. There is an army base located on the island. From the 7 comments one was made by the administration of the district and one by the western department of defence. The rest five comments are concerned with the Eastern Speed Diameter, which lies on the other side of the St. Petersburg. The remarkable similarity of the comments to those encountered in other districts allows to theorize that the inhabitants of the settlement affected by the proposed highway made those comments, but in order to create a wider social resonance the comments were sent to other districts as well (Pushkinskiy district).

2.3.10 Analysis by district: Kurortniy



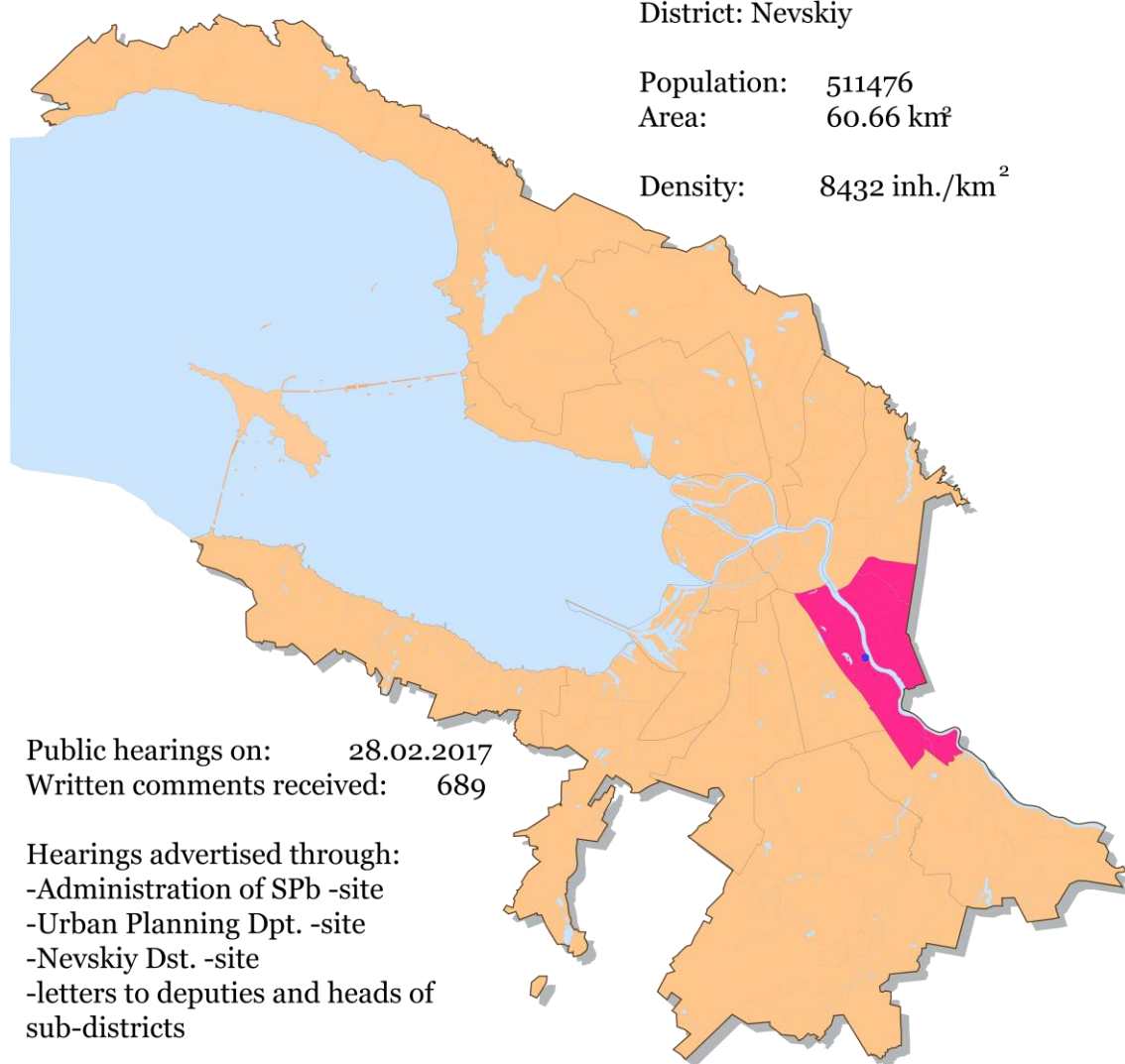
Kurortniy district is, as its name states, a resort area, used both as holiday and as a health resort. The majority of its territory was a part of Finland before the Winter War. The area was later used as a resort and as a prestigious summer cottage area (mostly due to the geological reasons: it is located on sand and gravel terrain, as opposed to the rest of St. Petersburg environment to the east, which is mostly swampy area). The current concerns of the population are about the interconnections of local logistical infrastructure and the highway projects the city is developing on the St. Petersburg – Helsinki highway connection. The same infrastructure involves ecological problems with concerns about natural habitats of protected animal and plant species.

2.3.11 Analysis by district: Moskowskiy



The Moskowskiy district is another example of radially located district that has a gradient of city<->suburb within its area: the innermost part is a densely packed urban landscape, whereas the outer part is less developed. The southern part contains Pulkovo Airport and Pulkovo observatory. Those local actors dominate the local environment in terms of infrastructure, traffic and special zoning requirements. The majority of the comments are made by the inhabitants of a relatively small area in the northern part of the district, where pre-school educational infrastructure is overloaded by the amount of the inhabitants. Another significant part of the comments is concerned with the logistical infrastructure of the “settlement Shushary” it doesn’t have an adequate connection to the highway. The “Shushary” consists of both a densely built residential area on the western side of the tracks and an industrial-logistical node on the eastern side. The intersection of radial and circular highways and a logistical railroad node, in addition to traffic to and from residential areas create some congestion and force the inhabitants to involve themselves in the city planning. The rest of the comments are about the observatory and the special requirements such building imposes on an area.

2.3.12 Analysis by district: Nevskiy



Nevskiy district is the other district heavily impacted by the construction of Eastern Speed Diameter. The situation is almost identical to the Krasnogvardeyskiy district, there is comparable level of citizen's activity in the hearings. The arguments of the citizens are largely the same: the need to postpone the drafting of the Eastern Speed Diameter or the relocation of the said highway further away from the residential area. It is worth noting that some of the commentators are from the western part of the city where the Western Speed Diameter was built close to the residential area. Discontent with the outcome of the planning for their own area those citizens have set their mind on preventing "the same" from happening in this district. The majority of the comments are grouped into 81 case that reiterate the same idea. Instead of the usual "attack vector" of noise and chemical pollution some citizens have used the properties of classification of different highways as their argument: for example, one of the commentators attacks the very possibility of Eastern Speed Diameter at this location based on the frequency it will have to cross the other streets at the same level.

2.3.13 Analysis by district: Petrogradskiy



The Petrogradskiy district is one of the historical parts of the city. Only the most western part of the district was disturbed in the last years by the construction of Western Speed Diameter. As such, the district is predictably passive in terms citizen's involvement locally, as no major disturbances are going to happen in the area. However it is one of the more active districts on the global scale with comments concerning the status of green areas and protected species throughout the city and in the vicinity of the district. Another large group represented here are the “omnipresent” concerned citizens who object the highway drafted through the settlement (Pushkinskiy district).

2.3.14 Analysis by district: Petrodvorcoviy



The Petrodvorcoviy district, despite its distant location from the historical centre of the city, is mostly an area of cultural heritage. Peter the Great founded Peterhof (the other name for Petrodvorec) as a summer palace-residence city. In addition to it many summer villas were constructed by the aristocrats on the coast of Gulf of Finland – those territories are now a part of cultural heritage. After the creation of circular highway via the dam and through the Kronstadt, the area will not see many large projects of regional significance. Due to this fact all the comments were concerned with the local issues, such as maintenance of waterways for the fountains, etc. One significant remark was a proposal to continue metro line towards a railway station in order to create a synergy of a metro-railway node.

2.3.15 Analysis by district: Primorskiy



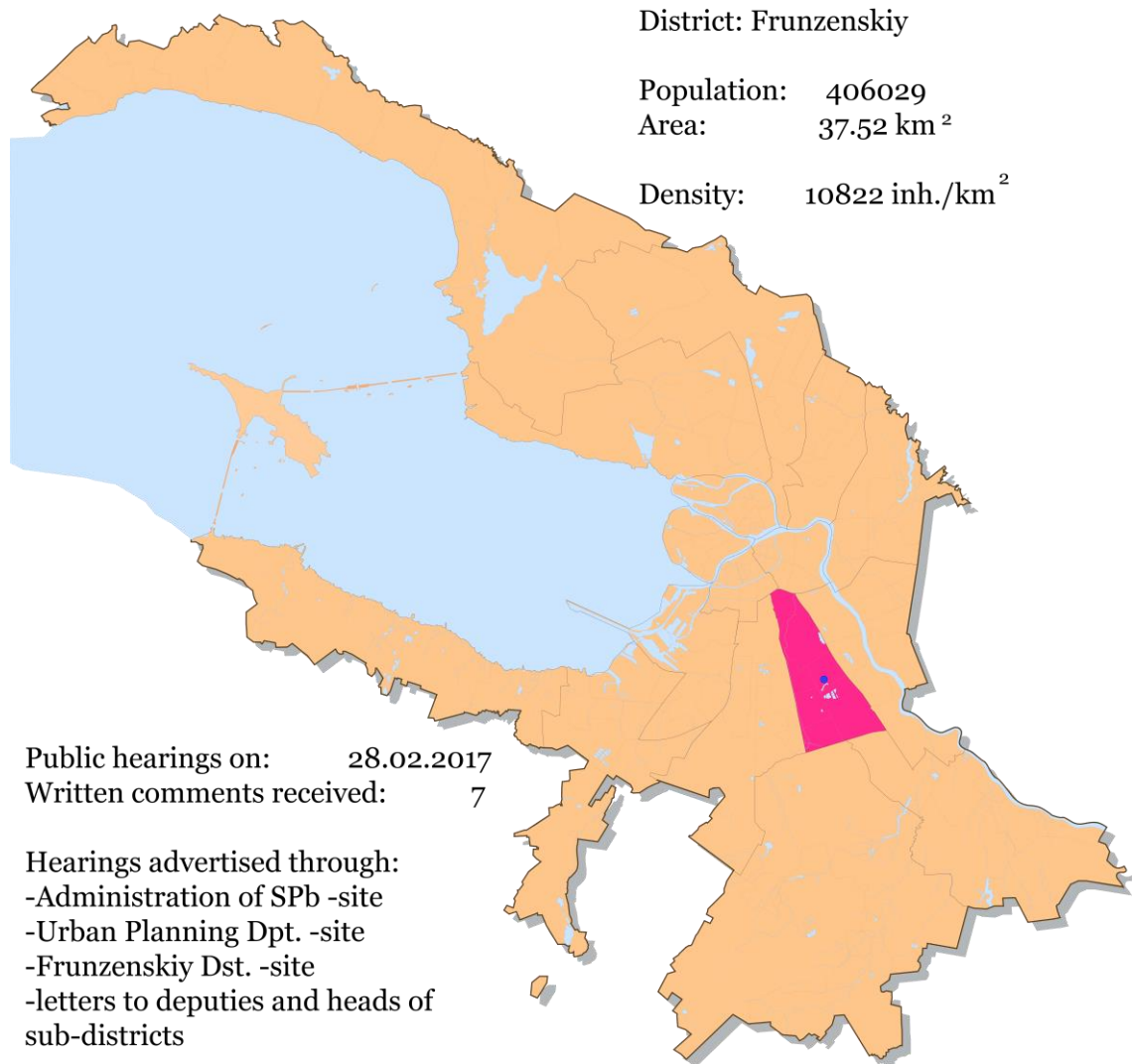
The Primorskiy district has already seen its share of large-scale infrastructure projects. The opening of Western Speed Diameter has brought a large amount of traffic through the area. It has made the area both attractive to further residential construction due to good logistics and brought higher pressure to create recreational areas. According to the norms, the amount of green areas per capita is only 56% of the required minimum: 5,96sq.m. against the 12sq.m. The inhabitants of the area are proposing to change different “general purpose” zones into recreational areas, whereas some owners of the land still want to capitalize on the value of the area and ask for their “general purpose” areas to be requalified as residential building areas. As one can see, here different actors have opposite agendas, as bringing even more residents into the area would diminish the amount of recreational space per capita.

2.3.16 Analysis by district: Pushkinskiy



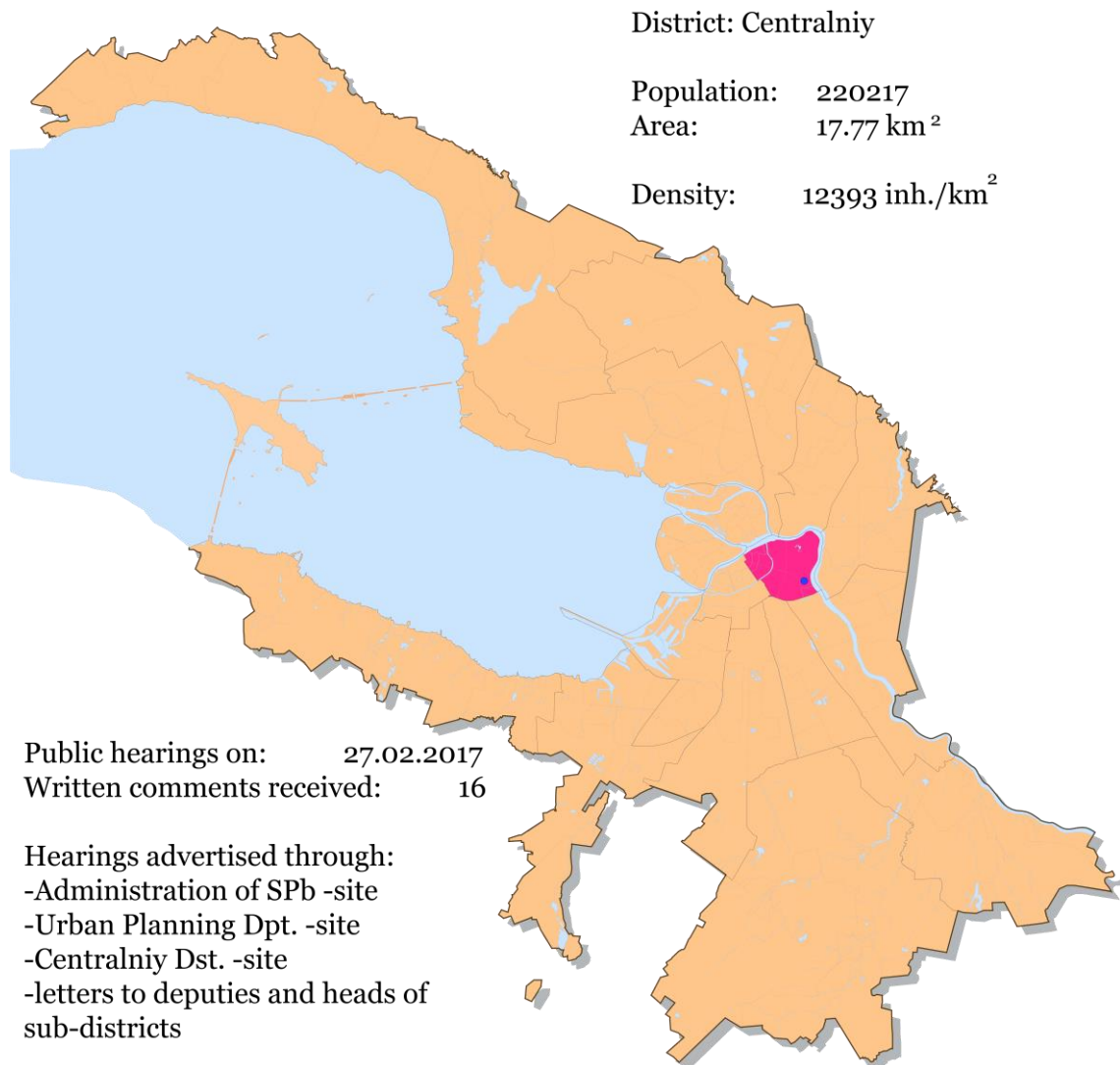
The Pushkinskiy district is the arena of heated debates due to the project “Yuzhniy” (“Southern”) which encompasses towns of Pushkin, Pavlov and the settlement Aleksandrovskaya with the objective to create a residential satellite with good logistical connection to the city. The towns have already started to grow together into one urban area due to residential buildings. The inhabitants of the area see creation of a circular highway around the territory of the project “Yuzhniy” as the solution for the traffic. The Aleksandrovskaya is a settlement made of detached cottages. The part of the proposal that was met with fierce feedback in many of the districts (mostly by the same people in every case) is a ~2.5km long stretch of a highway coaxial to one of the railroads. The construction of said highway would require “the demolition of numerous houses” (an average of 60-100, judged by the satellite view). Though the situation appears to allow for an alternative route, it is unclear why such proposal was made in the first place, one possibility is that the detached houses are built on plots illegally or the documentation was not updated – some of the houses are built as close as 19 m from the railway, which is against many norms. The settlement “Shushary” has voiced the same concerns in this district.

2.3.17 Analysis by district: Frunzenskiy



The Frunzenskiy district has taken its share of densifying the urban residential area and as the bigger infrastructure-related projects have moved on, it became a relatively quiet, in terms of development, district. The private persons have concentrated their comments on protection of local historical monuments from the period of WW2 and local traffic issues whereas local business has requested that Eastern Speed Diameter should be raised over the surface in order to preserve local industry.

2.3.18 Analysis by district: Centralniy



The Centralniy district is an area of dense urban construction. The major part of the comments are about the currently desolate site (currently designate as available for residential buildings) between two green recreational areas and the necessity to designate this plot as recreational area. Some inhabitants would like to designate this area as available for business – whereas the solutions are different, they both aim at the same objective: prevent the creation of more residential buildings in the area and thus prevent the growth of traffic. The commenters have also voiced concerns that new high capacity streets will not solve the traffic problem, as the traffic has nowhere to dissipate further down the route. Most of the comments are from a group of people (collective comments) which makes it impossible to measure the actual involvement of the citizens. One of the commenters has also provided an alternative solution to area with high traffic load which includes an optimisation of a three-way node into a two-way node by diverting some of the traffic on the other streets without the changes into the streets themselves. The same commentary advocates for paid-to-drive highways as the trunk of city logistics and the basis for the renovation of logistical infrastructure.

3 The comparison of the citizen's involvement in the cases of St. Petersburg Strategy 2030 and Helsinki Vision 2050

From the point of view of written norms and legislation, the citizen's involvement in both cases should be on a comparable scale. However, the existence of an alternative city plan by an unofficial source in the case of Helsinki creates a huge disparity in levels of involvement.

The possible reason as to why there were no such activists in St. Petersburg should be investigated.

St. Petersburg is a much bigger entity, it can be roughly expressed as the population of whole Finland on an area twice that of Helsinki. However, the sheer size of it is not the only factor that brings complexity to the task. The other one is the availability of the databases for the general public. Some vital data, such as accurate population density on a scale of 100*100m squares is not available, at least for general public, in St. Petersburg. As it demonstrated by the comments in the case of St. Petersburg, the data sources have some errors in them. Presumably, this would require a cooperation of a larger amount of people in order to provide an adequate background knowledge of the area, as it is unwise to rely solely on data source that has proved itself to be inaccurate at times.

During the preliminary data collection both Helsinki and St. Petersburg have employed GIS –portals in order to collect opinions about the area. In both cases the approach was inefficient in a way that each and every citizen was providing his own remarks on the area, whereas a real-time aggregation of the results and feedback to the citizens would have changed the model from “one thousand monologues” into a “discussion of a thousand”.

In St. Petersburg the only in addition to the maps, the only visual materials provided were the posters about the “Strategy 2030”, which had nothing more than a few slogans on them – this kind of material can spark an interest but it does not provide means of conveying the basic ideas of the strategy. In Helsinki the visualisation of basic principles behind the Vision were made. The addition of workshops has helped the people to understand the ideas further.

The public display of the documentation in St. Petersburg was held in the offices of the administration of the districts, the premises were closed outside of office hours. This arrangement is sufficient according to the law, but was met with some critic from the employed citizens – it was quite troublesome to arrange for a day off in order to have a possibility to inspect the documents. The maps provided in St. Petersburg meet the criteria required by the law, but the technique is hardly an easy way for a nonprofessional to grasp the whole picture: the result is high degree of localization of the comments and as a consequence a very fragmented feedback that is difficult to

integrate into the system. The form in which the data is presented is as important as the data itself.

Another important lesson one can learn from the case of St. Petersburg is data processing. The existence of the data and the availability of the data are not synonyms. Public hearing transcripts have provided roughly 600 (six hundred) pages of comments by the citizens in total. The data exists in public access, but it can't be said to be "available". It is possible that the city planning department of St. Petersburg has access to that data in form of a text or a database, but the local activist, should such a person exist, will have to face 600 pictures of pages that cannot be searched, indexed or referenced to electronically.

From the point of view of activity of the citizens, there is a clear tendency that can be traced throughout the transcripts of public hearings in St. Petersburg. Involvement in a city planning process is an investment of one's time and other resources. One can see it as an expenditure of the limited resources a person has and such expenditure needs to be justified in the person's mind. The justification can be either a positive effect achieved by the participation – a better environment to live and work in, a pursuit of materialistic interest, such as an increase in the price of the plot due to different designation on the plan, or a negative effect that follows the failure to participate and prevent the possible "disaster" from happening. In case of St. Petersburg the stimuli of negative potential has proven to achieve much higher levels of involvement from the citizens. The most activity was generated by the Eastern Speed Diameter being drafted on the border of two districts and a 2,5km stretch of road that threatened the demolition of the buildings.

The following reasons can be cited as the core of lower level of citizen's involvement in St. Petersburg: the heritage of erroneous data in the databases, the unwillingness of city planning department to educate the population, the data management choices by the city planning department and the city, historical heritage – USSR was, after all, a single-party system which did not encourage alternative thinking.

The way of least resistance taken by the planners in St. Petersburg, i.e. providing the documentation and interaction as it is required by law has had a negative effect on involvement of citizens of St. Petersburg. As a result, they are likely to feel less connection to the strategy of the city and less commitment. The involvement under a threat of negative development will not prove an effective way to interact with the population. It might be a "cheap" way in the short run, as no resources are devoted towards the activation of the citizens, but every resource used on interaction with the population is an investment in the future of the city, whereas all the resources used on simulation of interaction are actually wasted.

4 Final thoughts

Citizen's involvement can take many forms. The most basic of them is the protection of the personal habitat. However, such involvement does not bear fruit and is more or less a manifestation of nimbyism. The procreative, positive involvement, based on the idea of solving problems together and finding a better solution for all is a far more complex and demanding level of involvement. The existence of such involvement can be seen as a strong signal of satisfactory level of communication and interactivity, but even more steps have to be taken in order to make such citizen's involvement a common place practice rather than an exception.

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